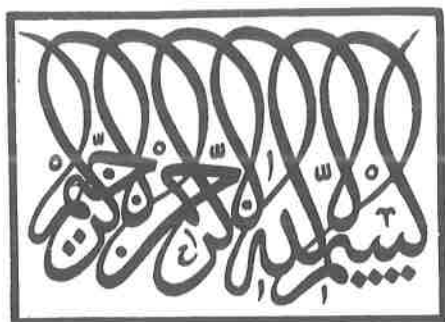


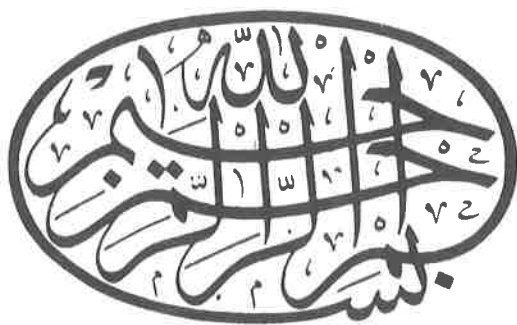
Forms of Bismillah - al-Rahman il-Rahim



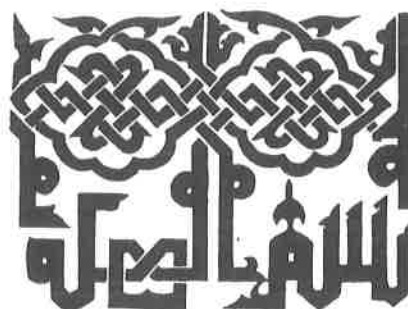
By Ahmed Karahisari, Turkey, 16th cty



From Turkish ms. Lâleli KN 1829, 15th cty, Turkey



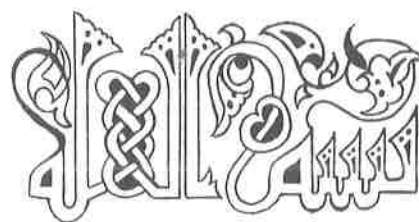
In oval shape, 19th cty (a)



From the Quṭub minār, Delhi, beginning 13th cty



In Ta'liq, by 'Abdulqādir 1351/1932



From the mihrāb of Sar-i Pul, Afghanistan, 2nd half of 12th century



By Ahmed Karahisari, Turkey, 16th cty

Muslims developed the fine art of Quranic Calligraphy

LESSON 17

WHY MUSLIMS BELIEVED IN RASULULLAH (S)

Rasulullah's invitation to Islam earned him many enemies, but it also gave him sincere and devoted followers. No prophet or religious leader had, in his life, such a dedicated group of followers.

The number of Rasulullah's *Sahabah* in Makkah was small. This small circle of companions, however, was the most fortunate group in the world. They were early muslims and had an opportunity to spend the longest time with their Prophet (S). They had the full benefit of Rasulullah's blessed company. They underwent hardships, performed great sacrifices, and rendered great services to Islam. Muslims remember them with love and devotion.

Here we ask the question: Why did these early Muslims accept Islam?

For these early Muslims there was no material benefit in accepting Islam. On the other hand, there were many risks. Constant persecution and harassment by the *Kuffar* had made life miserable for small Muslim communities. The weak among them were punished severely. There was an ever present danger to their lives. Some in fact, were even killed by the *Kuffar*. Many were forced to seek sanctuary in Abyssinia. When Rasulullah (S) asked them to leave their country and make *hijrah* to Madinah they willingly followed their Prophet (S). There must have been some special reason for them to believe in Islam and willingly suffer for their faith.

The very first Muslims were those who knew Rasulullah (S) personally. These people knew his truthfulness, honesty, simplicity, and sincerity, and they were convinced that he could never tell a lie. These people drew even closer to him after they became Muslims. This reputation of honesty and truth also convinced others who did not know him well. Among the early converts were some of those people who initially were not prepared to accept him as a prophet. But when they met him they became convinced of his sincerity and embraced Islam.

His personality must have been extraordinary. Whoever met him was influenced. Before his prophethood he had not looked for leadership. In fact, he retired from the world and sat in the cave of Hira. He never went back to Hira

after he became a prophet. All his life became public. Those who accepted Islam remained deeply attached to him.

His *Khulq* (morals and manners) were exemplary. No other human being has shown those traits and character so strongly. A'ishah(R) has said, "Rasulullah's character was the Quran in practice." In Makkah, Rasulullah (S) was persecuted but he remained patient. He was tempted by the *Kuffar* with beautiful offers, but he rejected them. He was kind and loving to his followers and just and considerate to his enemies. He was not provoked to anger when ridiculed and attacked. He never cursed even his worst enemies. In every situation he remained patient and attached to Allah. His days and nights were spent in prayers and *Tabligh* (preaching).

He never desired anything for himself. He did not seek comfort and luxury. Whatever he received he gave away in the way of Allah. He was so deeply religious and so morally perfect — an embodiment of truth, piety and sincerity — that anyone who met him with an open mind became his humble follower.

His *Sahabah* (R) imitated him in all the things they did and followed his instructions in every aspect of their life. After he was dead (May Allah bless his soul) His *Sahabah* (R) followed his *Sunnah* (tradition). *Sunnah* are the acts of the Prophet (S) and his instructions. *Sahabah* (R) and early generations of Muslims wrote down his *Sunnah* and Rasulullah's instructions. All Muslims have ever since tried to follow his *Sunnah*. Thus, both his personality and his character played important part in convincing the Arabs about the truth of his mission.

The revelation of the Quran was also a very important factor in the spread of Islam. Other prophets performed many miracles. Quran is the single most important miracle of Rasulullah(S). Its language is powerful, its style is unique, and its message is pure. Arabs were very proud of their language. They honored their poets and orators. That, perhaps, is the reason why Allah gave the Prophet (S) a miracle which showed such inimitable perfection of language. The language of the Quran was so beautiful that anyone who heard it was convinced of its superhuman character.

They knew that no human being could write that language. Many also knew that Prophet Muhammad (S) was unlettered. He was not known as an orator, a poet or story teller. People knew he could not compose such verses. In fact, all of them agreed that no one could compose such verses. Thus, anyone who heard the Quran without bias was convinced of its truth and became a Muslim.

Among the Arabs there were some people who still believed in one God and followed the teaching of Prophet Ibrahim (A) and Prophet Ismail (A). They were called *Hanif*. They did not like the evil ways of the Arabs. They had heard from Jews and Christians that a prophet is about to come. When they met Rasulullah (S) and heard the Quran, they became convinced of the truth of Rasulullah's mission and became Muslims.

Among the Makkans there were many slaves, widows (and women in general), orphans, and old people who were treated unjustly. Nobody cared about them. The Quran warned the powerful Quraish to stop their evil practices, give up their pride of race and sex, and treat all human beings with justice and human equality. By accepting Islam, these poor and helpless people suffered more, but the acceptance of Islam gave them a new faith and new dignity. They readily suffered but never gave up Islam.

Early Muslims themselves became message bearers of Islam. The acceptance of Islam changed their lives. Love of Allah, love of Rasulullah (S), and their good actions made them fine examples to other human beings. The people who met *Sahabah* became convinced of their true faith and became Muslims themselves.

Thus, not only the personality of Rasulullah (S) but also the character of early Muslims was very important in the spread of Islam. Wherever they went, both inside and outside Arabia, people looked at *Sahabah* and said, "These are the faces of people who speak the truth and practice righteousness." They wanted to be like the Muslims. They also accepted Islam. Islam is a religion for all humanity, and it freely admits all people to its fold. It is in this way that Islam spread fast and became a world force.

The *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad(S), the Book of Allah, the message of social equality, and the *Sunnah* of pious Muslims is still before us. If we follow it like early Muslims, Allah and His Prophet(S) will be pleased and the world will follow us. If we give up these things then we shall follow the world and the world will elude us.

Points of review:

1. For early Muslims there were no material benefits for accepting Islam, but there were many risks.

2. Rasulullāh's personality, personal characteristics, revelations of the Quran and Islam's social message were important factors in the acceptance of Islam by early Muslims.
2. Acceptance of Islam completely changed the life of the *Sahabah*; and they themselves became exemplary models of Islamic teachings.

Words to remember:

Embrace, *Hanif*, sanctuary, superhuman.

Quranic Study

1. We should study the characteristics of Rasulullāh (S) from the Quran and see what Allah says about him.

Study the following verses and write an estimate of Rasulullāh's mission and character.

His Mission: *al-Fath* 48:8-9

Gentleness: *ali-'Imran* 3:159

Mercy: *al-Tawbah* 9:61, *al-Qasas* 28:46

His Arguments: *al-Nahl* 16:125

Selflessness: *al-Furqan* 25:57

His pattern: *al-Ahzab* 33:21

His Role: *al-Baqarah* 2:151; *al-Ahzab* 33:40-45

al-Talaq 65:11

His character: *al-Qalam* 68:4

His prayer: *al-Muzammil* 73:1-9

Truthful messenger: *Yunus* 10:12-14

Patience: *al-Qasas* 28:126-127

2. The Quran is a miracle which could not be produced by human beings. Study the following verses to understand the claim of the Quran.

al-Baqarah 2:23; *Hud* 11:13

Yunus 10:38; *al-Kahf* 18:88